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Researching Your

FAMILY'S HISTORY

at the Massachusetts Archives



Published by
William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Archives at Columbia Point

updated 9/96



he Archives Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office is the repository for Massachusetts records generated by state government. Archives holdings date from the beginning of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1628, and document the settlement of lands in Maine and Massachusetts, the arrival of immigrants, and the development of state government. Public records are not in the holdings of the Archives strictly because of inherent genealogical value, but since they often include references to so many Massachusetts people, these documents are a major resource for people engaged in the study of family history.

In addition to the archival records created by Massachusetts state agencies, the Archives has a limited selection of printed works and microforms to aid genealogists and other researchers. These include basic genealogical reference books, but few printed family histories.

Access to these materials is provided through the Research Room of the Massachusetts Archives at Columbia Point. It is open weekdays, 9 to 5, except on legal holidays, and on Saturdays, from 9 to 3.



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VITAL RECORDS

Pre 1841

For pre-1841 genealogical research, attention must be shifted to local government records. The city and town clerks in Massachusetts remain the custodians of early vital records for their respective towns. Printed *Vital Records Prior to 1850*, organized by town, are available in many research libraries, including the Massachusetts State Library. A limited number of these volumes are also held by the State Archives.

The Genealogical Society of Utah has an active local records microfilming program; some of this film has been deposited with the State Archives. While the type of records, their format and the quality of the film varies for each municipality, the film includes records normally found in the municipal clerks' offices. Among the records on microfilm are vital records and corresponding indices, marriage intentions, records of town meetings and the boards of selectmen, and early proprietors' records. Occasionally church and cemetery records were microfilmed, along with genealogies. Additionally, commercially produced microfilm of town vital records is also available at the Archives.

1841-1905

The Archives holds the registration books of births, marriages and deaths for all Massachusetts cities and towns, 1841 through 1905. Municipal clerks submitted these registration pages to the state on an annual basis for the vital records generated by their office. While there is some variation in this information, generally the books provide names, dates, residences, occupations, and parental information. Some death records also include the place of burial. The Archives also holds microfilm of added entries and corrections to vital records for the same period. Later records in this collection will be transferred to the State Archives at five year intervals.

Access to the information contained in the vital records registration volumes is gained by consulting bound index books. The books are organized in five year intervals; within each index, the names are listed alphabetically. Reference staff in the Archives will assist researchers in the use of these materials.

Post 1905

Vital records after 1905 may be found at the municipal clerks' offices or the Department of Public Health, Registry of Vital Records and Statistics (470 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA 02210). Indices of the DPH registration volumes through 1971 are available at the Archives, but there are no copies of the actual records.

Death registration, town of Yarmouth, 1860

DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE				PAGE	for the Year eighteen hundred and sixty-			
NAME OF THE DECEASED	SEX	AGE	DATE OF DEATH	PLACE OF BIRTH	NAME AND BIRTH DATE	NAME AND BIRTH DATE	NAME AND BIRTH DATE	NAME AND BIRTH DATE
1. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
2. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
3. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
4. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
5. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
6. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
7. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
8. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
9. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
10. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
11. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
12. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
13. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
14. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
15. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
16. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
17. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
18. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
19. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
20. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
21. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
22. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
23. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
24. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
25. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
26. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
27. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
28. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
29. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
30. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
31. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
32. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
33. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
34. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
35. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
36. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
37. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
38. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
39. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
40. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
41. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
42. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
43. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
44. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
45. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
46. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
47. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
48. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
49. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
50. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
51. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
52. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
53. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
54. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
55. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
56. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
57. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
58. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
59. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
60. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
61. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
62. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
63. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
64. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
65. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
66. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
67. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
68. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
69. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
70. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
71. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
72. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
73. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
74. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
75. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
76. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
77. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
78. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
79. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
80. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
81. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
82. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
83. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
84. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
85. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
86. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
87. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
88. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
89. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
90. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
91. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
92. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
93. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
94. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
95. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
96. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
97. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
98. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
99. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815
100. John A. Smith	Male	45	Jan 10	Yarmouth	Marshall	1815	1815	1815

PASSENGER LISTS

Massachusetts officials started recording the names of immigrants who arrived by ship in 1848, a procedure which continued until 1891, when federal records-keeping programs superseded those of the state.

Although immigrants arrived at numerous Massachusetts ports, the Archives has lists for Boston only. These are arranged chronologically according to the date when the ship arrived in port.

Alien passenger index cards

Name	Rosa, Faustina	Age	37	Sex	F
Arrived (Date)	Port Boston Aug. 5, 1907	S.S.	Bk.	"Fredonia"	
If in U. S. before	---	Occupation	Domestic		
Birthplace (Nationality) ---					
Country of which citizen ---					

Name	Rosa, Felicia	Age	22	Sex	F
Arrived (Date)	Port New Bedford Dec. 17, 1893	S.S.	Bark	"Veronica"	
If in U.S. before	No	Occupation	Laborer		
Birthplace (Nationality) ---					

Name	Rosa, Felomena	Age	26	Sex	F.
Arrived (Date)	Port Boston May 3, 1885	S.S.	Bark	"Veronica"	
If in U.S. before	No	Occupation	Laborer		
Birthplace (Nationality) Flores					
Country of which citizen ---					
Last residence Flores					
Destination (State of which intend to become inhabitant) U.S.					
Mental and bodily condition --- List No. 137					

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Alien passenger lists

Facilitating the use of the passenger lists is an alphabetical name index, covering the same years as the registers, and providing the same information. This includes the name, age, sex and occupation of the immigrant; the country of birth, and last residence. Also included is the name of the ship, and the date of its arrival in Boston. Children who arrived on the same ship with their parents may be listed on separate cards, or they may be included on the same card with other family members. *It is important to note that the passenger lists do not generally provide information about the county or town where the immigrant originally lived.*

LIST OF PASSENGERS.

REPORT AND LIST of the Passengers taken on board the *S. S. Frederick* of *Frederick*
whereof *A. J. Smith* is Master, berthed
from the Port of *London* for *San Francisco* and *Albany* of a ton, tonnage

NAME.	AGE.	SEX.	RELATION.	RESIDENCE.	Remarks.
John Cook	36	Male	Labourer	London United States	
James White	11	"	"	"	
James Peery	28	"	"	"	
John Smith	22	Male	Labourer	"	
Richard Williams	37	Male	Labourer	"	
Mary	21	Female	Wife	"	
Mary	6	"	Child	"	
Mary	5	"	"	"	
John	5	Male	"	"	
Frederick	7	Female	"	"	
Elizabeth	25	Female	Wife	"	
William White	28	Male	Labourer	"	
Mary	25	Female	Wife	"	
Michael Brown	22	Male	Labourer	"	
James Green	22	Male	Labourer	"	
Mary Wilson	22	Female	Wife	"	
John	22	Male	Labourer	"	

CENSUS SCHEDULES

Federal census schedules date from 1790. Recorded on a decennial basis, they constitute a major resource for genealogy. Originally a fairly simple list of the heads of households, the population schedules became more detailed and new schedules were added as the nineteenth century progressed. By 1850, the general population schedules list all individuals residing in a house, and provide data on their age, occupation, place of birth, and value of real estate. Additional schedules providing social and mortality statistics, and the products of industry and agriculture were also present by 1850. All of the schedules are broken down by counties and municipalities. Large cities are further subdivided into wards, and enumeration districts. Indexes, including the soundex, have been prepared for some of the schedules.

The Archives holds microfilm of the federal census general population schedules dated 1790 through 1880, and 1900. The 1890 population schedules were destroyed by fire in Washington, D.C. in 1921, however a special census of Union war veterans and widows of veterans was taken in 1890 and is available on microfilm. Printed indices for the census schedules through 1850, and the War Veterans census, are at the Archives; however we do not hold any of the soundex cards for the other schedules.

The State Archives also holds state census schedules prepared in 1855 and 1865. The information contained in the state census is similar to that of contemporary federal returns, and they are arranged in a similar manner. A name index for these schedules exists for many of the small towns in Essex, Middlesex and Norfolk counties, and Charlestown.

City of Boston, Wd 4, in the COUNTY of Suffolk, STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS,
 INHABITANTS in the *Ward* of *Ward 4*, in the COUNTY of *Suffolk*, STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS,
 enumerated by me, the *2nd* day of *May*, 1865.

Serial Number	Name	Age	Sex	Place of Birth, name of State, Territory or Country	Profession, Occupation, or Trade of every person over 15 years of age	Value of Real Estate owned	Value of Personal Estate owned	Value of Real Estate owned	Value of Personal Estate owned	Value of Real Estate owned	Value of Personal Estate owned
1	Joseph Brunswick	40	M	Mass.							
2	George	3	M								
3	705 George Barbarean	40	M	Italy	No Organ grinder						
4	Mary	30	F	"							
5	Peter	8	M	"							
6	Antonia	12	F	"							
7	704 Joseph Brunswick	35	M	"	No Organ grinder						
8	Mary	30	F	"							
9	John	8	M	Mass.							
10	Maty	15	F	Italy	None						
11	Angelina	9	F	Mass.							
12	705 Antonia Barbarean	35	M	Italy	No Organ grinder						
13	Mary	30	F	"							
14	525 706 Francis Barbarean	40	M	"	Organ grinder						
15	Mary	35	F	"							
16	Mary	7	F	Mass.							

Register of the 1865 Massachusetts state census

MILITARY RECORDS

Military records in the Archives cover conflicts dating from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries, although those of major genealogical use date from 1643 to 1865. The records can be used to identify the service of particular individuals, but provide little background on the person's family or life.

Information concerning military service in the colonial wars (circa 1643-1774) can be gleaned from legislative records, and a variety of military rolls and accounts. Similar rolls from the Revolutionary period document the service of those in the state militia and the Continental Army. Additionally the Archives holds records of state pensions and bounties of Maine land grants for Revolutionary War veterans or their heirs, who were not eligible to receive federal pensions. Family relationships may be included in the pension records, as heirs tried to document their status. Military records from the colonial wars and the Revolution are indexed by name, and are available on microfilm at the Archives. Revolutionary service is also referenced through the seventeen volume set, *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War* (Boston: 1896-1908).

Records from Shays' Rebellion (1786-87), a period of internal turbulence, are located in six volumes of the "Massachusetts Archives" collection. Among these records are letters, orders, warrants, petitions, special reports, military payrolls, financial records and oaths of allegiance.

Military records relating to the War of 1812 (1812-1815) are found in the records of the Governor and Executive Council; these are concerned primarily with the formation of militia units and commissions for officers. *Records of the Massachusetts Militia in the War of 1812-1814* (Boston: 1913), provides information on the militia regiments called out in 1814 in anticipation of a British attack on Massachusetts.

The most complete list of Massachusetts men who served in the Civil War is found in the multi-volume set, *Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors and Marines in the Civil War* (Norwood and Brookline, MA: 1931-1935). Archival records include a variety of muster, clothing and descriptive rolls, lists of assignments of recruits to particular town quotas, correspondence from recruiters serving in the south, and materials documenting the use of substitutes for draftees. Other archival materials from this period include the records of the State Military Agent and the letterbooks of Governor John Andrew, an early and strong supporter of the war effort.

Records relating to the Spanish American War (1898) include a small collection of letters and petitions for bonuses from veterans or their families to the Treasurer and Receiver General.

Other Military Records

The Adjutant General's Office oversees a large collection of military records. These are particularly strong in the areas of the Mexican, Civil, Spanish American and twentieth century wars. These records are stored in Worcester at the Office of the State Quartermaster, 44 Salisbury Street, Worcester, MA 01609.

***Revolutionary War muster
roll for the Lexington Alarm,
April 19, 1775.***

<p>Managers must roll up the men that are under the command of Capt. Gooden to the Stationary Reg^t when said Capt. is absent.</p>				
Company	Private	Private	Times of musters Marched from Huntsville	Whole
Co. H. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Days	\$1:4
Co. I. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. J. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. K. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. L. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. M. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. N. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. O. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. P. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. Q. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. R. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. S. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. T. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. U. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. V. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. W. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. X. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. Y. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4
Co. Z. 1st Regt. Ala. Inf.	22	19	Do	1:4

THE "MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES"

The collection of documents known as the "Massachusetts Archives" (or the "Felt Collection") is an important source of records for early Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire families. Documenting the development of the Massachusetts Bay government and settlement of its lands between 1630 and 1800, the collection includes original records of the Governor, Council, the General Court, the Secretary and the Treasurer. These cover a wide range of topics of interest to genealogists: land grants; early records of divorces and contested estates; legislative papers, including petitions and remonstrances; military records from 1643 through 1775; records of mercantile affairs; and tax valuation lists, 1738-1786.

The records are bound into 328 volumes, which are arranged in a rough topical fashion. Most of the volumes have a table of contents, and many have been indexed. A surname/place name catalogue exists for approximately one quarter of the collection, and a relational database provides name, location and subject access for eight volumes.

[illegible]

Agreement signed by Nahnaacomoc and Passaconaway, June 12, 1644, taken from Massachusetts Archives collection, volume 30

Since Maine was an integral part of Massachusetts from the early colonial period through 1820, there are many records in the Archives pertaining to the settlement and settlers of Maine. The "Massachusetts Archives" collection contains a variety of Maine records dating from the 17th and 18th centuries; the Maine records are not grouped separately within this collection, but are distinguished by county. General Court records, including both passed and unpassed legislation, contain petitions, remonstrances, reports and correspondence relating to Maine from 1780 to 1820. The Eastern Lands papers focus on the settlement of public lands in the District of Maine, and its separation from Massachusetts as a state in 1820. Legal, survey and financial records of the General Court, legislative commissions and records of the Land Office are included in the Eastern Lands papers. Researchers will

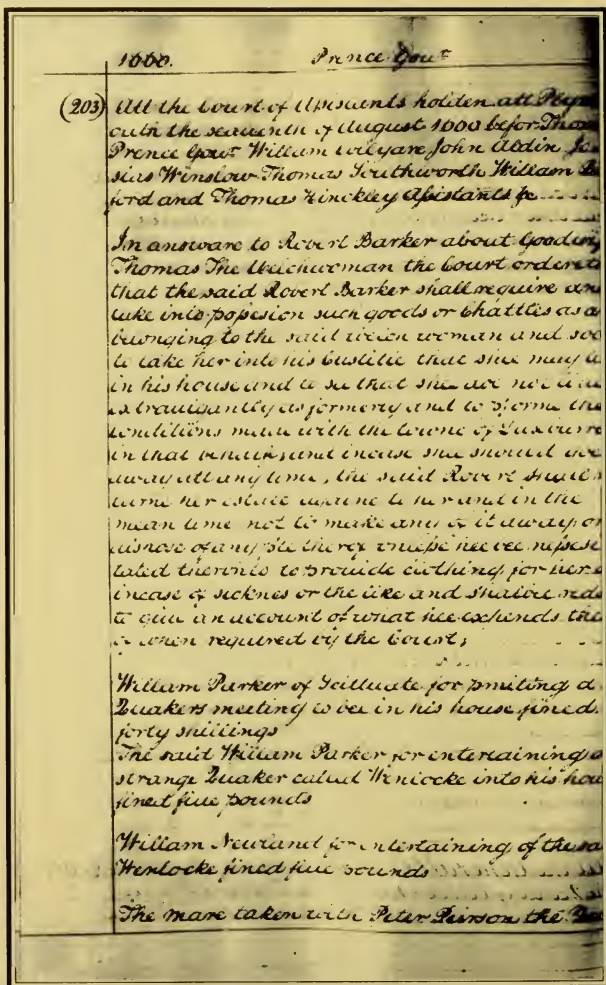
also find copies of deeds for land conveyed by the Committee for the Sale of Eastern Lands and the Land Agent, the establishment of land titles in disputed areas, and extensive correspondence regarding road construction, land settlement and the development of Maine's natural resources. The Archives holds indices to several volumes of the deeds, and the correspondence dating 1783 through 1867.

Surrey Januaryth 12 1839
 Mr Coffin sir
 I want understand that a person
 has sent to you for No 22 and I
 want you to agree with him to let
 me have the corner of said lot lying
 between the new Turn road and the
 Pond turning N^y and No 23 at a fair
 price as I have made improvement
 on it according to my first line
 which will be about 10 acres
 and you will oblige me very
 much your humble servant
 Thomas Custer
 Thomas Custer
 1839

**Letter to George Coffin,
Massachusetts Land Agent,
regarding land in Maine**

PLYMOUTH COLONY RECORDS

Plymouth Colony, also known as the Old Colony, existed as a separate entity until 1686; it was officially merged into the Province of Massachusetts Bay in 1692. The original colony records for Plymouth, including wills and deeds, are maintained at the Plymouth County Commissioners Office in Plymouth. The State Archives holds manuscript transcriptions of these records, which we service whenever possible through name indices. Most of the Plymouth Colony records, along with the records from the Commissioners of the United Colonies, were published in a twelve volume set, *Records of Plymouth Colony* (Boston: 1855-1861), available at the State Archives and the State Library.



Transcript of records of the Plymouth Colony Court of Assistants

RECORDS OF STATE INSTITUTIONS

Many of the human service agency records held by the Archives document the activities of state institutions, including schools, almshouses, reform schools, hospitals and prisons. Institutional records held by the Archives were created by the following agencies: mental retardation and mental health (originally designated as "lunacy"); public welfare (originally designated as "charities"); public health; youth services; and corrections. Case histories, records of admissions and dismissals, and other registers provide detail on the lives and families of people at these institutions. It is important to note that access to institutional records may be restricted to preserve the privacy of individuals at the institution. Researchers should contact the Archives before planning a visit to use these records in order to determine what restrictions will apply.

Reg. No. 14N38 Age 17
Name Helen Scott

From Boston June 8 1906
Condition Normal
Discharged July 16 1906
Sent to Mrs. Tuttle, Boston
For Nux

Settled in Boston, sick. (see)

17 St. Boston (See Hamman Ave)
May 14, 1888.
Sister - actress.

Q. Sister of Sarah L. Utica NY 2nd
Mo. - died NY City Nov. 1891.
Mrs. Scott at 1 Maple Ave Boston.
in living house -
Died at Compton, Oak, Bennett and
Hammond Sts

to Mrs. Tuttle

Reg. No. 14N39 Age 17
Name Cecar H. Smith

From Boston June 5 1906
Condition Insane
Discharged Oct. 25, 1907
Sent to Liberty St. - not returned
For Nux

No settlement (see)

62 St. Boston Jan 30, 1894 -
(Police St.) married and wife
Cecar. (Child)

Always made his home in Boston
no prop no prop no prop

Q. John H. Smith, Jr. of Hamman Ave
Albany, N.Y. died there Mass born
190. So. Carter. earned prop. & selling
Dr. W. Chen. - premise. died in Chen
190 - He in Chen from 1894

Wife Mary age 30
Father did not run real estate
until after son's majority.

Tewksbury State Hospital intake files, 1906

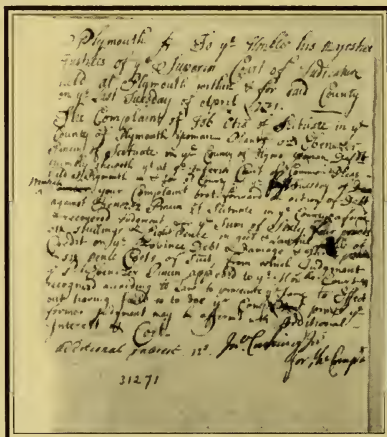
JUDICIAL RECORDS

The Judicial Archives, a separate and distinct collection of early court records, is housed at the Massachusetts State Archives. These records are an invaluable resource for genealogical researchers. Among the records held as part of the Judicial Archives are the pre-1860 records of the predecessor courts of the Superior Court (Court of General Sessions of the Peace and Inferior Court of Common Pleas), and the records of the Supreme Judicial Court and its predecessors, the Court of Assistants and the Superior Court of Judicature. Other judicial records include naturalization records from the Supreme Judicial Court (1782-1887) and the Superior Courts, (1887-1922), naturalization records from the Superior Courts and some District Courts as well as probate records.

Actions found in records of Supreme Judicial Court vary widely. Included in the records are cases involving real property, personal property (including personal injury), mixed actions, all pleas to which the Crown was a party, all matters related to the conservation of the peace and cases appealed from other courts. In addition, cases of divorce (1780-1887) and capital cases (1780-1891) can be found in these records.

The county courts, established in 1643, saw all cases involving civil disputes not exceeding a sum of money (which varied over time), and all criminal cases not concerning life, limb or banishment. In 1692 these duties were divided between the courts of general sessions of the peace, which handled the county business and criminal cases, and the inferior courts of common pleas which dealt with civil cases.

Middlesex Court of Common Pleas, 1802 plea of John Richard



W^{ill}iam, II. GEORGE the Second, By the Grace of GOD of Great Britain,
France and Ireland, KING, Defender of the Faith, &c.

To the Sheriff of Our County of Middlesex his Under-Sheriff or Deputy, Greeting,

WE Command you to Attach the Goods or Estate of Robert Ward & Co. Bankers
Widow John of Mortons within Our County of Middlesex Yeoman

To the Value of Twenty Pounds, and for want thereof, to take the Body

(if he can be found in your Precinct) and then to keep, so that you have him before Our Justices of Our Inferiour Court

of Common Pleas next, to be Holden at Boston, within and for Our said County of Suffolk, on the First Tuesday next: Then and there in Our said Court to

Answer unto David Draper of Roxbury within Our County of Middlesex Yeoman, in a plea of Debt, for that whereas the said Robert Ward & Co. Bankers

indebted to you £20 the sum of Twenty pounds ten shillings, for a certain

Yoke of Oxen then sold Voluntarily in consideration thereof, and that as you the

same on demand yet the said Robert Ward & Co. Bankers have not paid the said

last seven pounds five shillings nor paid in part thereof, and the sum of

seventeen pounds five shillings six pence still remaining due thereof

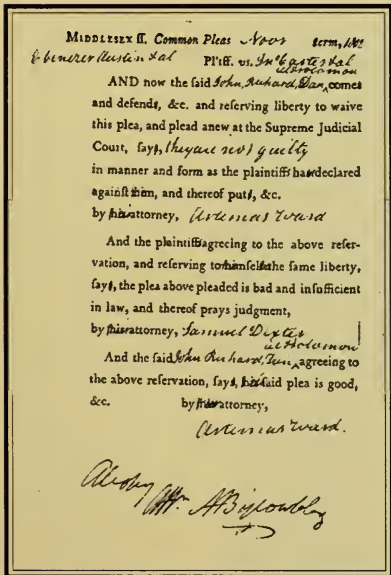
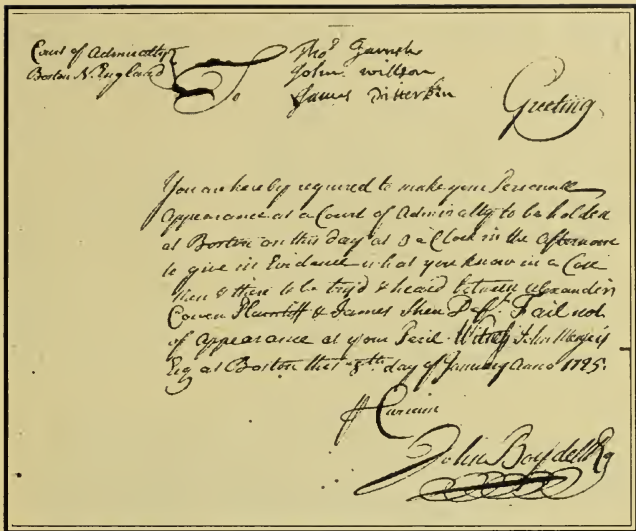
unjustly deny to pay, which

To the Damage of the said David Draper (as he saith) the sum of Twenty Pounds; which shall then and there be made to

Appear, with other due Damages; and have you this Writ, with your doings therein. Witness Thomas Palmer Esq; at Boston, this 16 Day of March In the Fourth Year of Our Reign. Annoque Domini 1790

Admiralty Court,
January 8, 1795
summons to pro-
vide evidence

**Middlesex County
Court of Common
Pleas, writ of
attachment, 1730**



The Suffolk Files

The Suffolk Files contain the earliest file papers of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and its predecessors, the Court of Assistants, and the Superior Court of Judicature. There are also some records of the county courts, and the court of Common Pleas and General Sessions of the Peace. The records contain cases from Massachusetts and parts of Maine and New Hampshire; this was the result of the circuit nature of several of the courts and the fact that most of the action brought before the upper courts had been appealed from lower courts throughout the region. The records, which were in hopeless disarray, were arranged and indexed over a twenty-five year period beginning in 1883. Extensive indices of every person, place and subject, as well as date and calendar indices were prepared.

**Superior Court of Judicature complaint,
Suffolk Files, 1730**

Naturalizations

Among the information found in the declaration of intent and the petition for naturalization will be the name, address, occupation, and date and place of birth of the applicant; information regarding arrival in the United States; marital status, and the names of children, along with their dates and places of birth.

Bristol County Superior Court (1805-1990)
 Fall River District Court (1885-1906)
 Essex County Superior Court, Lawrence and Salem
 (1906-1982)
 Gloucester District Court (1885-1906)
 Lawrence District Court (1885-1906)
 Newburyport District Court (1844-1906)
 Franklin County Superior Court (1853-1976)
 Hampden County Superior Court (1812-1987)
 Hampshire County Superior Court (1849-1988)
 Ware District Court (1885-1906)
 Northampton District Court (1885-1906)

Declaration of Intent, Hampshire County

Westborough District Court (1892-1906)

Additional information on Massachusetts naturalizations is available from the National Archives, New England Regional Branch in Waltham. They hold photostatic copies of the original records from state and local courts prior to 1906, which are indexed through the soundex system. Records of Massachusetts naturalizations for the U.S. District Court (1790-1945) and the U.S. Circuit Court (1845-1911) are also held by the National Archives in Waltham.

**Petition for Natural-
ization, Hampshire
County**

JUDICIAL RECORDS: PROBATE

Name Changes

Prior to 1852, name changes were administered by the General Court. Anyone interested in legally changing their name submitted a petition to the legislature. The petition and resulting legislation are held by the State Archives. Also held by the Archives are petitions that did not result in legislation.

Chapter 256, Acts of 1851 transferred jurisdiction over name changes to the county judges of probate. These probate records are either part of the Judicial Archives (see above) or maintained in the county probate courts. Returns of the name changes up to 1900 were sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office. Until 1913, the returns were published annually in the *Acts and Resolves*. Name changes from 1780 through 1900, including those enacted by the legislature and those decreed by the probate judges, were published in the volume *List of Persons Whose Names Have Been Changed in Massachusetts* (Boston: 1893). The book, which is thoroughly indexed, provides the following information: original name; new name; date of change; and the chapter number of the legislative statute or location of probate court.

It is important to note that the information provided above concerns only name changes that were authorized by the General Court or probate courts. Many people changed their names informally, and did not record the change with the state government. The names of immigrants may have been Anglicized upon arrival in the United States, or the spelling altered significantly, but these changes are not usually documented.

Adoptions

Records of adoptions complement the records showing name changes. As with name changes, adoptions prior to 1852 were enacted through the General Court. The petition requesting the adoption and any accompanying legislative papers are available through the State Archives. Chapter 324, Acts of 1851 transferred responsibility for adoptions to the probate courts. Records after 1851 are either held by the Judicial Archives, or are maintained in the courts. The returns of name changes, and the *List of Persons Whose Names Have Been Changed in Massachusetts* note when names were changed as a result of adoptions. However, many adoptions were not recorded legally. Children were frequently sent out of their families to live with other people, including relatives. Other children went to live with neighbors, but were not adopted as part of the family.

Petition requesting a name change due to an adoption, 1851

To the Honorable of the General Court
now in session at Boston.
Your petitioner Josiah Butts of Ware in the
County of Berkshire would Respectfully represent
that he has an Orphan boy living in his family
by the name of Josiah Hamilton Leonard which
he wishes to adopt as his child and to take the
name of Josiah Hamilton Butts and Your Petitioner
as in duty bound will ever pray
Peru Jan 1st 1851 Josiah H. Butts

Additional Genealogical Records held by the State Archives

Other collections held by the Archives, not normally associated with genealogical research, may also provide information on families or individuals. These include the collection of maps and plans and legislative papers. Many maps, especially those of towns in Maine, include settlers' names with their residences or lots. These maps often relate to legislative action or material from the Eastern Lands papers. Legislative records for both passed and unpassed bills include petitions, remonstrances and local documents in addition to the bills. These may provide information about specific individuals, particularly when the legislation concerned the incorporation of a town, business or land grant.

Additionally, Massachusetts Water Supply real estate records include photographs of houses and graves in the four disincorporated towns prior to construction of the Quabbin Reservoir as well as portions of other surrounding towns.



Metropolitan Water Supply, Photographs of real estate takings, Barker home in Prescott, c. 1938



Plan of the District of Dover, 1831



For more information contact:
Massachusetts Archives at Columbia Point
William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125
(617) 727-2816